THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

of

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

presents

EXPLORATIONS

Sunday, November 30, 1975 at 8:00 p.m.

Convocation Hall, Arts Building

MUSIC FOR BRASS INSTRUMENTS (1944) ..... Ingolf Dahl (1912-1970)

Chorale Fantasy on "Christ Lay in the Bonds of Death"
Intermezzo
Fugue

Fordyce Pier and Alvin Lowrey, trumpets; Gloria Ratcliffe, French horn; Malcolm Forsyth and Christopher Taylor, trombones; David Otto, tuba

STRING TRIO NO. 2 (1961) ..... Violet Archer

Allegro ma non troppo
Interludium
Siciliano
Allegro deciso

Thomas Rolston, violin
Michael Bowie, viola
Claude Kenneson, cello

INTERMISSION

"DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE" (1791) ..... Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja
Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen wünscht Papageno sich

FOLKSONG ARRANGEMENTS (1943) ..... Benjamin Britten (b. 1913)

Sweet Polly Oliver
The Salley Gardens
O Waly Waly
The Foggy, Foggy Dew

Harold Wiens, baritone
Diana Wiens, piano

TRIO, OPUS 114 (1891) ..... Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Allegro
Adagio
Andantino grazioso
Allegro

Ernest Dalwood, clarinet
Claude Kenneson, cello
Sylvia Hunter, piano

The next concert in this series: Sunday, January 25, 1976. The program will include a trio sonata by Leclair, Pfitzner's "Six Studies for Piano", Loeffler's "Pieces for Oboe, Viola and Piano" and the Michelangelo Lieder by Wolf.

PROGRAM NOTES

Like some of the other "American" composers heard in this series, Ingolf Dahl was born and trained in Europe before emigrating to the United States (he was born in Hamburg and moved to California in 1938). After settling in Los Angeles, he carried on a distinguished career as a teacher, conductor, and composer. His main field of compositional interest was instrumental music. Therefore, it is appropriate that his **Music for Brass Instruments** should find a place in tonight's program, since it not only exhibits his fluency in writing for instruments, but also because it is an outstanding example of brass quintet music produced in the United States.

The compositional techniques evident in the three movements contrast markedly, but all are rooted solidly in the Western tradition. In the first movement, Dahl has led the Lutheran hymn **Christ lag in Todesbanden** through a series of chorale variations, supported by harmonies derived from the notes of the chorale itself. He has captured the flavour of American folksong in the theme of the second movement; the theme is tossed rapidly from instrument to instrument until the dialogue is concluded with exuberant cadenza-like passages for the trumpets. The last movement, a fugue, begins with a harmonized statement of the theme, before commencement of a more traditional exposition in separate entrances. For contrast, Dahl has included a lyrical section of widely contoured melody whose material combines with fugal elements in a final coda. The sharp contrasts in the character of the movements effectively counterbalance the purity of the brass choir.

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The **Trio No. 2** for Violin, Viola, and Cello by Violet Archer was commissioned by the Corydon Trio of Winnipeg in 1961 and was composed in the Fall of that same year. The latter group performed the première of the trio on the National Network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on January 23, 1962.

The present performance is the first in Alberta. The work is in four movements. The first, **Allegro ma non troppo,** is whimsical and somewhat playful. The second, **Largo, arioso,** is a free and lyrical interlude between the first and third movement. The latter is a **Siciliano.** It is serene and graceful. The fourth movement, **Allegro deciso,** is brisk and determined.

—Violet Archer

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It would seem reasonable to expect that excerpts from a Mozart opera would differ substantially from folksong settings written 150 years later by Benjamin Britten. Although the harmonic and melodic idioms in the accompaniments do differ, there are some strong resemblances between the two selected Mozart arias and the four Britten songs. **Die Zauberflöte,** an opera of pervasive national characteristics which developed in part from the German **Singspiel** tradition, caters more directly to the spirit of **Das Volk** than most of the master's operas. The folk quality in the opera is most evident in the earthy character of Papageno, who sings both of the arias chosen for this performance.

Papageno's character is summed up well in the first lines of each of his songs: "The birdcatcher am I, always merry and bright, tra la!" and "A little maid or wife—that's what Papageno wants." His folk-like songs are in both cases preceded and concluded by orchestral material; in the second song a vocal passage is also included in the andante introduction, which contrasts with the sprightly song proper. Apart from the framing material, the format of both arias is strophic, a rather simple structure for Mozart. Britten, whose folksongs are drawn from various regions in the British Isles and France, also employs simple forms most of which are ready-made in his sources. The four selections chosen for this performance make use of simple strophic, binary, or ternary designs; in each case the accompaniments perfectly complement the simple folk tunes, and in all cases frame the tunes with a fitting prelude and conclusion. The accompaniment to **The Salley Gardens** is daringly simple with subtle modulations; that of **The Foggy, Foggy Dew** perfectly captures the facetious quality of the text; the poignant ostinato in **O Waly, Waly** suitably underlines the dejected mood of lament; and the composite of strophic form, canon, and variation in **Sweet Polly Oliver** highlights the trickery of the main character. Both Mozart and Britten, then, have managed to create skillful and contemporary musical commentaries for simple folksongs.

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Brahms wrote his **Trio, Opus 114** late in his life, shortly after he had drawn up his will. Prior to this work, he had not written for clarinet in his chamber music, so his choice of instrument in the trio, and in the **Clarinet Quintet,** which followed soon after, is rather striking. His newly discovered partiality for the clarinet probably resulted from his acquaintance with renowned clarinetist, Richard Mühfield, who he affectionately dubbed "Miss Clarinet" because of the sweetness of his tone.

But Brahms' interest in the clarinet did not diminish his sensitivity to the other instruments in the trio, the cello and piano. On the contrary, he tastefully balanced the three, achieving a notable blend between the clarinet and cello. In the first movement, for example, after a smoothly dovetailed opening initiated by the solo cello, he affected a balanced compromise between themes idiomatic to the cello and arpeggiated gestures well suited to the clarinet, but shared democratically by all the instruments. He allowed the piano to lead into the delicate conclusion of the movement with rapid pianissimo scale passages which in turn are taken up by the other instruments, and extended into arpeggios in contrary motion in the last few measures. The second movement begins with a plaintive clarinet melody which reappears in various guises (modified, fragmented, augmented); the third movement includes some hemiola effects, and the last movement an evanescent shifting between duple and triple meters. The second themes of both the first and last movements are introduced as canons of the inversion. But throughout the changing textures of the trio, in the words of Mandyczewski, Brahms' editor and friend, "It is as though the instruments are in love with each other."

—Bryan R. Gillingham